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**REMARKS BY
U.S. AMBASSADOR TO BANGLADESH DAN MOZENA
IN OBSERVANCE OF
SIXTEEN DAYS OF ACTIVISM AGAINST GENDER VIOLENCE
PATIYA COLLEGE GROUND
CHITTAGONG
NOVEMBER 28, 2012**

Dr. Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury, Honorable State Minister, Ministry of Women and Children Affairs
Mr. Shamsul Haque Chowdhury, Member of Parliament, Patiya
Dr. Abul Hossain, Project Director, Multi-sectoral Project on VAW, MOWCA
Md. Abdul Mannan Deputy Commissioner, Chittagong
Ms. Rokeya Parvin, Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO), Patiya
Mr. Henry Alderfer, Chief of Party Protecting Human Rights (PHR) Program, Plan Bangladesh
Mr. Mobasher Hossain, Field Operations Manager; PHR Program Plan Bangladesh
Mr. Jobayed Hossain, Advocacy and Communications Manager, PHR Program; Plan Bangladesh
Mother....

Sister...

Wife...

Daughter...

These women ... Mother, Sister, Wife, Daughter ... are critical to all of us, both individually and to society as a whole.

Without them, of course, life would be no more.

Our mothers brought us into life ... and nurtured us ... and guided us through the tumult of early life ... they taught us the essential values of life.

Our sisters grew up beside us, giving us a broader, richer perspective of life.

Our wives are our partners in life ... they are the foundation of the home, of the family, of the community ... they are the key to creating and nurturing our daughters and sons, the next generation ... and thus the cycle of life continues.

It is a beautiful thing, this cycle of love, of partnership, of creating and nurturing a new generation ... and our mothers, sisters, wives, daughters are the drivers of this wondrous cycle.

But there are those among us who beat, abuse, neglect, defame, even defile our mothers, sisters, wives and daughters.

This gender-based violence is a huge problem here in Bangladesh, in America and around the world.

Such violence and abuse are difficult to understand. Why would anyone want to attack the most cherished elements of our families, of our communities, of our society, of the nation, and, indeed, of the world?

It does not have to be this way ...

Around the world, so many are fighting back; men and women are joining together to fight gender-based violence.

Earlier this month ... when I was Chirirbandar in Dinajpur, I met with a group of community leaders ... men and women ... who have come together to protect their mothers, sisters, wives and daughters.

Working with the Government of Bangladesh at both the national level and the local level, America is Bangladesh's partner in the fight against violence and abuse of women.

Working together, America helps Bangladesh make people aware of the horrible impact of gender-based violence and the need to stop it.

Working together, America helps Bangladesh build the capacity of lawyers, police, judges, medical professionals and others so they can identify gender-based violence and take action to stop it.

Working together, America helps Bangladesh support the victims of gender-based violence so they can recover, both physically and emotionally.

America has helped Bangladesh create guidelines for implementing the Domestic Violence Protection and Prevention Act.

America has helped Bangladesh establish a Human Rights Advocacy Forum, which brings together representatives from eight ministries and civil society to coordinate ongoing efforts to reduce and eliminate domestic violence.

I am proud that America is Bangladesh's partner in the battle to protect the nation's mothers, sisters, wives and daughters.

I hope you, too ... each of you, each one of you ... are committed to protecting Bangladesh's mothers, sisters, wives and daughters.

Truly the Sonar Bangla is possible only if all the nation's citizens, including the women, can live in peace and harmony, without fear of physical or mental violence or abuse.

Thank you.

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**As prepared for delivery*